

ROMANCE FRAUDS

Romance Frauds continue to cause both financial and mental harm to their victims, hence our need to cover this topic more frequently to make everyone aware of its dangers.

Whilst the majority of people using dating sites are genuine and honest, users should always be vigilant when discovering new relationships online to protect yourself and your bank account.

Check that the dating site you are using is a member of the Online Dating Association (ODA) which offers levels of protection, and also a means to report abuse of the site online. Never be afraid to report a suspected scammer to the ODA, as you should not be the person to feel ashamed.

Ways to spot a Scam:

- Remember scammers after only one thing – your money
- Do not provide too much personal information on a Dating Site profile
- Look out for spelling and grammatical errors in their Profile
- The person you are talking to tries to get you to move from the dating site onto a Chat site early in the relationship
- Declarations of love start flowing too early in the contact; they will tug at your heartstrings and send messages of tenderness or neediness
- Scammer will play on your emotions with sad stories about needing money to exit a country, or to come and meet you, or for finance for medical expenses for sick relations and many, many more plausible stories
- Never respond to requests to send money to someone you have only just met and especially if they ask for payments by Gift Cards or Bitcoins which may be untraceable afterwards
- Scammers may suggest they want to send you money, and ask you for details of your bank account so they can then access it – NEVER give out bank account details
- Beware of requests for finance to help set up a new business, or even to pay for an ongoing business operation
- Never share personal images of yourself that are revealing and inappropriate with anyone you have never met; these very often lead to blackmail situations
- Scammers may also request money to be sent to a named bank account, but the name on that account will not be the one from their online profile, and may well be in another country

And finally, never be rushed into making any decision, if you are unsure then sign off, talk to a friend or relative and if still unsure, block that contact to save any further problems.

DVSA Scam

Texts have been circulating recently claiming to be from the DVSA and telling the recipient they “Have a Parking penalty due” and “if you do not pay your fine on time, your car may be banned from driving, you might have to pay more or you could be taken to court”

Firstly, DVSA does not deal with parking fines so never send such texts, and secondly the texts are easily recognised by the date format, as well as spelling and grammatical errors.

Do not click any links in the message, and just delete it straightaway.

Please feel free to share this information with any family, friends, or neighbours that you think it may be able to assist.

Take Five to Stop Fraud

STOP: Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

CHALLENGE: Could it be fake? It's OK to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

PROTECT: Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud

ALWAYS REMEMBER:

- Avoid disclosing security details
 - Emails, Phone Calls and Texts may not be authentic
 - Always make direct contact with any organisation by using a genuine phone number
 - Stop and Challenge any unexpected requests
 - Protect others by reporting Fraud and Scams
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If you've fallen for a scam,
report it to **Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040** or via actionfraud.police.uk

Scam Text messages can be forwarded to 7726 to help phone providers take early action and block numbers that generate spam on their networks. You can also report Scam mobile calls by texting **7726** with the word "**Call**" followed by the **scam caller's phone number**.

Forward **Fake Emails** received to report@phishing.gov.uk

If you think your bank account or personal banking details have been used fraudulently, then use the short phone number - **159** - to contact the Fraud Prevention Department of most major UK banks.